

**FRS Regional Data Stewards Network  
Meeting/Conference Call Notes – April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2000**

**Handouts:** OIC distributed the following materials prior to the conference call: (1) a Draft Data Steward's Manual (DSM), (2) a draft agenda for the National Data Steward's Meeting; (3) mark-up comments on the draft DSM from Ken Blumberg; and (4) a draft FRS Project Plan.

**Participants:** Marian Cody, Pat Garvey & Bill Sonntag, OEI/OIC; Fred Leif, R-IX; Ken Blumberg, R-I; Joe Kunz, R-III; Rebecca Kemp & Rich Nawyn, R-IV; Laura Milton, OECA; Noel Kohl, R-V; Cynthia Culvert ABT Associates; and Chuck Herrick, PERI Environmental Associates.

**Background:** During the previous meeting (4/16), participants discussed the "Principles" and "roles and Responsibilities" sections of the draft DSM. The document is being revised to reflect these discussions. Participants also discussed strategies to help institutionalize data stewardship.

**Summary of Discussions:** Bill Sonntag welcomed participants to the conference call and asked for comments and/or revisions to the last (4/6) meeting notes. It was noted that Region IX's FLA Procedures document was to have been used in developing appropriate aspects of the "Procedures" section of the FRS Data Steward's Manual. The Region IX approach will be reflected in the Data Management Procedures Document (see 4/13 notes from Change Protocols conference call). Sonntag also briefed the group on recent ECOS meetings in Philadelphia, including activities of the EPA/State Data Exchange Network. While the ECOS meetings involved a great deal of discussion regarding data stewardship, they did not produce consensus or clear direction concerning how data stewards will operate and/or where they will reside in terms of organizational affiliation. In addition, Sonntag shared that the ECOS Environmental Data Workgroup had discussed a plan for a National Environmental Data Exchange System, in which EPA would retrieve data from State collections.

Major topics of discussion included the following:

Data Stewards Manual (DSM): There was general agreement concerning the roles and structure laid-out in the draft DSM. It was agreed that Regions would reserve flexibility to designate whether they might need to utilize more than one "layer" of stewardship (e.g., a Regional Data Steward and a Regional Data Stewardship Coordinator). It was also agreed that the DSM would emphasize cooperation beyond the Federal level, including States and localities. In general, the DSM needs to emphasize the collaborative nature of data stewardship.

Reorganizing the Procedures Section of the DSM: Marian Cody proposed to re-organize the Procedures Section of the draft DSM. Basically, the section will key procedures to a series of basic stewardship functions, such as changing records, reporting discrepancies, establishing a record, and so on. Ms. Cody also explained that the OIC is working with the Records Change group to develop a detailed "FRS Data Management Procedures Document." It was agreed that the revised DSM would be available for review and discussion at the National Data Stewards

Meeting (see below), currently scheduled for May 17 & 18 in the Washington, DC area.

Performance Standards and State Participation in the FRS: The DSM discussion of Data Steward roles includes reference to “performance standards,” and the need to assure accountability across the entire network. Concern was expressed that EPA/OEI would be unable to impose or enforce performance standards with the States. Sonntag and Garvey explained that the initial population of the FRS will entail negotiations with States, thus providing an opportunity to address the question of how performance standards can be addressed under the collaborative umbrella of the FRS.

Data Steward’s Meeting Agenda: A draft agenda for the National Data Steward’s meeting was discussed near the end of the conference call. The importance of couching FRS in terms of the I-3 and other major OEI information initiatives was stressed.

**Action Items:** The next conference call will focus on roll-out ideas for the FRS Data Stewardship and an update on whether OEI will be able to provide travel money for the Data Steward’s Meeting.

**Next Meeting/Call:** To be combined with the Change Protocol Conference Call/Meeting, the next call is scheduled for Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00-3:00.